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Slideshow

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Teaching Word Meaning in First Grade

Indiantown, FL • April 20, 2007

Topic: Teaching Literacy in English to K-5 English Learners

Practice: Teach Vocabulary

Highlights

- How a teacher introduces focus words
- Using graphic organizers and drawing on student experience to teach the words
- Example of student extending new vocabulary to other contexts of use

About the Site

Warfield Elementary School (K-4)

Indiantown, FL

Demographics

75% Hispanic, 5% White, 17% Black

96% Free or reduced-price lunch

67% Limited English proficient

Warfield Elementary School uses an inclusive, English immersion approach for their English learners, the majority of whom are of Guatemalan descent and speak either Spanish or one of several Guatemalan Indian dialects, which lack a written language. Distinctive features of the school include:

- A continuous improvement model for instruction; data disaggregation and analysis, facilitated by a reading coach and writing/math coach, drive all instruction
- Instructional calendars for all content areas and grade levels that show standards being taught, instructional activities, and assessments to monitor student progress
- A schoolwide reading program based on an external model, along with a core textbook program
- Data available to teachers on fast turnaround, either in profiles produced by the reading coach or through reports from district and state databases
- Whole-group instruction based on the instructional calendars, combined with flexible small-group instruction based on students' needs
- Interventions provided within the classroom, including several that are technology-based
- Instructional strategies that are research-based; for example, a vocabulary program that is based on Isabel Beck's research
- All teachers with an ESOL endorsement on their teaching certificates
- Paraprofessionals who speak the children's native languages to ease the transition into school and support teachers in working with students

Full Transcript

Watch a first grade teacher use a series of strategies to teach the meaning of “chuckle” and “complain.”

Slide #1: Introducing Words

She starts by introducing the words with pictures and discusses them with her students, using questions like:

What do you see?

What do you think they’re doing?

How do you think they feel?

Have you done something like this?

Then she reads the sentence on the back of the picture card and has more discussion.

Slide #2: Using a T Chart

Then, the class uses a graphic organizer, such as this “T chart”, to further define the words based on students’ experience. The teacher focuses on two words a week instead of the six recommended by the program, and she determines the order in which words are taught. For example, she chose “chuckle” and “complain” to capitalize on their contrasting meaning and because she is currently teaching /ai/ in her phonics lessons.

Slide #3: Drawing Pictures

After the whole group activities, students draw a picture that reminds them of the meaning of the word. The teacher discourages them from copying the picture that comes with the material. Rather, she urges them to use the material in the “T chart” and relate to their own experience. For example, she says Yesenia will be more likely to remember the word “complain” if she thinks of her little sister pulling her hair!

Slide #4: Vocabulary in Multiple Contexts

Students readily make connections when they see vocabulary appear in other contexts. A girl saw this picture and approached the teacher with excitement, because she noticed that the kitten and the mole were “chuckling”!